DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 663 PS 012 764

AUTHOR Holt, Bess-Gene
TITLE The Enabler Model of Early Childhood Training and Program Development.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 20p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Involvement; Consultants; *Consultation Programs; *Early Childhood Education; Guidelines; *Models; Needs Assessment; *Program Development; Qualifications; Technical Assistance; *Training Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Enabler Model

ABSTRACT

The Enabler Model (EM), a non-prescriptive approach to help communities implement their early childhood programs, is described in this paper. The model is based on the positive educational value of human individuality, the life-long ability of all humans to learn and develop, and the power of human sociability in determining the content, extent, and quality of learning. The fundamental condition of the EM is the matching of a community ready to work hard for change in its program with a qualified Enabler consultant. Four stages have been identified in the development of the EM: establishment and assessment of local needs, providing technical assistance to community members, consultation, and termination of service. Each stage has a central, focal process, and requires somewhat different emphases, rules, and functions of the Enabler consultant. The stages are also related to time, happen in sequence, and build one upon another. Issues and cautions of the Enabling process, and outcomes of the EM model and its applicability are discussed. (Author/MP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED214663

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

THE ENABLER MODEL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT [1]

by

Bess-Gene Holt

[1] The author wishes to acknowledge the support of the Office of Child Development, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1970-1973, and specifically the encouragement of Dr. Jenni W. Klein, of that office. The author also wishes to acknowledge the support of the Iowa State Child Development Training Office and its director, Shirley Karas, in adapting the model for day care work in Iowa, 1977-1979.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bess-Gene Holt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 012764

The Enabler Model was developed as one of twelve models studied in the Head Start Planned Variation (HSPV) project. These twelve approaches to preschool education derive from differing educational theories and philosophical premises. The Enabler Model is unique among the twelve as it presents no predetermined curriculum plan; each community develops its own. The original model was conceived and prepared by Lilian Katz (1977), who was, with Jenni W. Klein, responsible for initial briefing with the HSPV Enablers.[2]

The HSPV Enabler Model was tried in six culturally diverse sites across the country. Each program was served by its own Enabler consultant and each Enabler served only one. Original projects had visits of four days every month for two nine-month school years. The third, "phase-out," year meant three three-day visits. The Enabler consultants provided records of the programs which communities devised--given regular, consistent, professional, supportive, responsive help. Enablers recorded local activities and concepts, and local participants' and their own impressions. They described the evolution of these programs as objectively and faithfully as possible, in extensive narrative reports.

The group of Enabler consultants met together periodically, working to define the projects' commonalities, to perfect the Model's structure, and to evaluate their own effectiveness. Reports were given from time to time to the larger group involved in the HSPV project, and were also shared with professional colleagues (Holt, 1971; Bowman and Holt, 1973). The group's evaluation of experiences at each community, and the search for the common ground among them, form the basis for this paper.

---

[2] Barbara T. Bowman, Bess-Gene Holt, Jean T. Kunz, Maria Torres, and Eleanor Van Lewwen were Enablers for the full span of the project. Harriet Yarmolinsky left the project after one year. That site was served for the duration of the HSPV project by Tupper D. Webster.

The unique aspects of each program would fill six books. The commonalities are less voluminous, but more significant to the general reader since they form the Enabler Model as a describable and repeatable entity. The commonalities form its structure. People working together in any single community are its content.

Objectives

Based on the original conception of the Model (Katz, 1977) the Enabler group adopted the following objectives for their work:

1. Help the community define and work toward its own goals and purposes
2. Encourage, through support and responsive training, the local participants to solve their own problems and make their own decisions
3. Help parents and staff members build communications and relationships with each other and with local resources and agencies
4. Facilitate local discovery and recognition of, and reliance on, local strengths and talents.

Conditions for Selection of the Model

Originally this structure was called "the consultant model". The qualifications and characteristics of the Enabler are significant. So are the moods, conditions, needs, and volitions of the community.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION OF THE MODEL IS THE MATCHING OF A COMMUNITY READY TO WORK HARD FOR CHANGE IN ITS PROGRAM WITH A QUALIFIED ENABLER CONSULTANT.

The Consultant's Qualifications

The unique patterns forming the individual Enabler person will result in widely different styles of working and relating, of perceiving and feeling, of communicating and teaching, with other people. The characteristics described here, however, are those Enablers have in common which are model-related.

Extensive training and experience in early childhood education and child development is basic. The consultant must have ready expert knowledge of many factors which define and influence growth and development of children; what does and does not constitute effective, positive teaching of children; what is and is not appropriate equipment, material, and methods; how to involve and work with parents; how to inspire teachers to make new and different efforts on behalf of children. An Enabler needs a large reservoir of interdisciplinary knowledge in general, and specifically about all component areas of Head Start or other comprehensive child development programs: health and medicine, nutrition, psychological and social services, career development, business administration and law, for example. Experience in such comprehensive programs helps.

Experience in teaching both children and adults, and varied skills in informal "opening up" techniques which stimulate thinking and facilitate problem-solving in groups are essential. The consultant should be open-minded about curriculum, methods and styles of teaching. She or he needs to have a reflective mode of thinking, and to be a continuous learner.

An Enabler has to have the ability to perceive, seek out, and value the community's strengths and resources. The ability to communicate with the varieties of people who make up a community is important. The consultant has to be flexible in social relating style, and to be able to enlarge her or his own strongly felt values, so that those held in the community which differ can also be appreciated.

The Enabler should have the ability to identify problems which underlie surface issues, and the skill to impart some techniques for crisis coping. She or he should accept the need of people to test the trust they have put in the Enabler or in each other.

To be able to organize observations on site, to give clues or "trust signals" that the community recognizes is important. The Enabler has to

establish a number of touch points with community persons. Some of these: ethnicity, social class experience, or urban-rural orientation, may be part of the matching-placement process. In other ways, the Enabler's cultural, political, and religious knowledge, for instance, allows for mutually comfortable working relations, for acceptance, for further confidence and understanding.

An Enabler needs to accept the Model's objectives, the philosophical premises underlying them, and the ethical system implied. An Enabler needs to believe and demonstrate that each person, child and adult, is first of all himself or herself uniquely; further, that each community is also unique, not like any other; and an educational program based on human individuality is pertinent, therefore effective. A key characteristic is genuine respect for the goals and purposes of others and a sincere concern for the lives and learning of children and adults.

The Enabler Model is based on the premise that the relations among people are powerful determinants of both what and how they learn from each other. The Model assumes that the most meaningful learning takes place when people need it, feel they need it, and define the need. In other words, how people feel is important. Therefore, the work, support, and guidance require an orientation to both process and product in education. It requires also the ability to work over wide spans of time, to see ahead, to non-impulsively hold long-range goals in mind during temporary upheavals.

Assuming people in local programs will benefit most when they discover their own strengths and talents, an Enabler functions so that these discoveries are part of the outcome. Thus, she or he accepts and values a truly democratic process, and believes there are many merits in pooling ideas and methods. To work without personal recognition and credit for the community's achievements is difficult. The successful Enabler has to do just exactly that.

Knowing one's own strengths and limit points, one's touchy areas and growing edges, is helpful. An Enabler must understand that her or his own feelings and behavior, self-acceptance, flexibility, stamina, etc. makes a difference to others. The consultant is a model, too.

In short, an Enabler has to be a highly professional person who achieves personal maturity, regardless of age, and shows the ability to keep going.

The Community's Readiness

Prerequisites for adoption of the Enabler Model in a given community include both the recognition of the need for change in the program, and some indication that parents and staff want to and will participate.

Early childhood programs sometimes recognize the need for changes through a self-assessment process. An outside source of program evaluation can be instrumental in revealing areas needing improvement or showing gaps in current services, as nationwide Head Start monitoring procedures have shown. Evidences of conflict, apathy, or boredom, some crisis within the program--these conditions or a combination may signal the need for changes, renewal, or reassessment. Any of these situations could prompt consideration of consultant services. The appropriateness of the Enabler Model does not depend on a precise assessment of community needs, however. Community volition is much more significant.

The group considering the Enabler Model must be willing to involve the total program: the children, the parents, the administration, the staff of all component areas, and other concerned groups or individuals within the community. Change in any one phase of programming necessitate and cause corresponding or accommodating changes in other areas.

A SENSE OF COMMITMENT TO ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION OVER A SPAN OF TIME IS REQUIRED OF EVERYONE.

It is possible to have this commitment where a number of individuals or groups are willing to assume responsibility and have, or can be afforded, corresponding degrees of autonomy. Motivation for changes which may be conconflict-laden, anxiety-producing, personally threatening, and which sometimes lead to temporary breakdowns in performance, has to be strong. Administrative leaders must be prepared to set an example by involving themselves in the process. Enthusiasm and understanding at this level are essential. In accepting the Enabler Model, the agency should realize that some of the most vital changes which will occur may not be immediately judged as desirable, that results may be uneven, and that positive outcomes may be slow in surfacing and being defined.

The Enabler Model does not meet the needs of a community desiring a "crash program," since this model does not provide ready-made prescriptions. Since the Model presumes sustained commitment and change, it is not appropriate in agencies unable to accept altered basic attitudes, role definitions or duties of individuals or groups. The Enabler Model would be unlikely to satisfy a community seeking a pretested model curriculum for its early childhood program, although adapting material from many sources to local needs is part of the Model's fiber.

The Match: Community and Consultant

It is necessary to find a consultant who fits into the particular community. Time is needed for the community to make a selection through checking credentials and personal qualifications, and--hopefully--a visit interview. It is important to find someone the community can respect and with whom the group can work effectively. The consultant should probably not be a local citizen or have served the program in other capacities, because Enabler is a very special role. The total cost of the Model is the cost of the fee and expenses of the consultant, making it exceptionally economical as models go.

When the Enabler has been selected and a contract agreed upon, plans to work together should be made for at least one, and preferably two years. The agency that is willing to share a clear and honest evaluation of its program with the consultant will gain the most and do so the most rapidly. Administrators who can give support and freedom to make appropriate decisions to project staff will find greater benefits accruing more quickly. Plans should also be made for periodic, mutual evaluation sessions--possibly at the end of six months, one year, and/or two years. Neither party should be irrevocably bound by the Model contract, since the Model works well only when the match is a good one.

The Enabling Process

What really happens with the Model? Four stages have been identified in the development of Enabler Model programs; (I) Establishment and Assessment, (II) Technical Assistance, (III) Consultation, (IV) Termination of Service. Each stage has a central, focal process. Each requires somewhat different emphases, roles, and functions of the Enabler consultant, which apply over a variety of settings to which the early childhood program extends. The stages are also related to time; they happen in sequence; they build, one upon another. As the program develops, a new focused need becomes central. The progress is not in neat steps, because stages overlap, and mesh and merge. The stages happen with different timing in different components of the program.

THE PROGRESSIVE CHANGE IS, IN A WORD, DEVELOPMENTAL.

The consistency of consultant's visits are a significant part of this process. Enablers experience, stimulate, and respond to developmental processes of children and adults, and also of the program as a whole, through returning again and again. At all stages, the Enabler's support and encouragement

is important, perhaps in part because change and improvement take time, and require sustenance.

Stage I. Establishment and Assessment

The enabling process has a different starting point in each community. It depends on the initial reasons for selection, on the level of assessment already done, and on community readiness. The amount of time this stage takes also depends on some practical considerations like the distances between centers and the number of persons and sites in the program. In most instances, the following activities are of central importance for the first two or three months:

1. Getting Acquainted. At first, the Enabler consultant meets, listens to, and gets acquainted with many people who have something to say about the program. It takes time to get to know the community, and for the people there to be comfortable with the Enabler. The Enabler wants to understand the cultural, economic, and lifestyle aspects of the community. These help determine the problem-solving techniques and activities which the community will find most useful. The Enabler studies staff patterns and the general structure of the program, its expectations and role definitions. Problems which underlie surface issues may be indicated. The Enabler is also identifying resources for the future. For instance, contacts might be made with public school personnel; medical, nutritional, and public health workers; part supervisors and recreation planners; welfare and other community, social services; and the locally used university or extension service. Communities need to understand that the Enabler can be most helpful to them when she or he has a clear picture of the community gained from many sources.

2. Assessment. Getting acquainted provides the program with a new look at itself. The Enabler's role is to ask: "What do you want to do?" "What have you been doing?" "Do you want to change it or keep it and why?" "How does it fit in with your goals?" "Why do you think it works or doesn't work?" "What should I, as an outsider, look at?" "What should I expect to see?" At this point it might be hard for local personnel to see why the Enabler doesn't do something. Requests for evaluative opinions are frequent, but that is not the Enabler's job. Indeed, it could handicap her or his functions.

3. Setting goals. Some programs have already set up goals, or some person may have done so. These make a good starting point. The Head Start guidelines, or their equivalent in another kind of program, may be used. The process can

also be started from scratch with the Enabler's support. In any case, the Model is based on local goals, to which everyone contributes and on which everyone agrees. All program components are involved. The Enabler encourages parents and staff to spell out their ideas, to tell what they want to happen with children, and to communicate with each other about it. Part of the job is to facilitate communication so that eventually people agree on the aims of the program. The consultant's background in early childhood education can help insure that goals for children are developmentally realistic. Original goals may be broad. They will not mean the same thing to everyone. Jargon may need to be translated, for example. Defining goals appears to be an ongoing process of clarification. The Enabler is also sensitive to highlight new, different goals arising in the process.

Two kinds of specific objectives might also come out, and be clearly defined and concrete. One kind refers to a current issue, or offers an immediate solution to a crisis. These are often temporal prescriptions of expected behavior. The question of how they fit into the overall community program structure must be examined. The other kind, specific objectives based on the community's long-range goals, appear to be developed over time, by participants, as purposes guide plans. These objectives will change, appropriately, with progress.

4. Preliminary planning. At the same time, the Enabler assists in planning and preliminary discussion on how these goals are going to be pursued. She or he can clarify and confirm the structure of goals and how they relate to one another. The Enabler helps everyone establish some agreement on what comes first--examine and set priorities and decide on strategies. These are decisions for the community to make. Attention to issues should be limited in scope and number at any time. Narrowing of the community to only one effort, or diffusion into many, can waste energies. It is part of the Enabler's work to sort out and recognize changes in goals, objectives, and priorities, to keep touch with them and confirm them from time to time. Groups sometimes need to refocus on their own goals.

   The result should be a set of goals and priorities, an assessment of what has been and is being done in relation to these directives, and preliminary plans for the rest of the term of operation.

   As the program defines priorities, the resources needed to effect change can be identified and/or developed. Decisions going into a work plan have firmer bases, and are mutually accepted. Training plans can be based directly on assessment and goals, with trainees asking for training they know they need.

5. Establishing Working Relationships. Mutual respect and trust are essential as the Enabler and the community work together. People learn they can depend on the consultant because she or he consistently responds with support and help. The Enabler is ready to give acceptance, praise, approval, and recognition.

Stage II. Technical Assistance

The community learns the Enabler will say "yes" to requests for direct training services. These services are an integral part of the plans made for reaching goals. During the next few months, even the first year, of the Model, these activities may be of greatest frequency. Some of the procedures most likely to be prominent are:

1. Listening, discussing, and explaining: Much of the training is through informal contacts with individuals and small groups. The Enabler meets with staff members, parents, various program-connected committees, and does this regularly and as invited. The consultant answers questions, and adds to discussion, sometimes leading it. It also means asking questions and finding other ways to stimulate thinking and create interest in learning something new. Since all participants do not have the same training needs, this is individualized.

2. Observing and demonstrating: In classrooms, the Enabler observes, works alongside the teaching staff, and may actually be demonstrating techniques. The Enabler might be asked to conduct a meeting or help the person who does. Planning a program for an individual child may include working with other component services. The Enabler highlights and aids conceptualization of these observation-based plans as part of her/his teaching.

3. Giving training sessions: Most comprehensive programs include in-service training sessions of more formal and scheduled nature. The Enabler can give workshops, or be part of a group which does. Parents and staff members identify their own topics and ask the Enabler for the specific training they want, and can often suggest how it can be most effectively done.

4. Providing problem-solving techniques: There are always problems, quite often conflicts, when groups work to organize and maintain an extensive program, like Head Start or day care, or any educational program with families. The Enabler cannot solve these problems for the community. But she or he can expand the techniques people use, such as searching out underlying causes, examining alternatives and new interpretations, seeking new information, clarifying communication.

5. Providing resources: The Enabler supplies information, needed and requested in many ways, such as recommending or bringing books, pamphlets, films, and so forth. She or he can help find sources of materials, can tune programs in to information networks, can provide dates and places of pertinent conferences. It may mean helping to find other people, especially local people, who have needed information, thus aiding participants to seek and use other expertise.

6. Evaluating: Goal-clarification, setting priority decisions, and planning continue. The Enabler might suggest a reassessment, and help the program redirect, if goals are getting lost. The Enabler also supports and stimulates ongoing self-evaluation. Less direct technical assistance will be necessary, and it appears less will be requested, as the program develops more of its own strengths and resources.

Stage III. Consultation

After the peak of training services, the advisory or true consulting functions of the Enabler become more central in the work. The consultant will do less answering and more to facilitate people finding their own answers. It is important that programs understand this shift, for instead of "Yes, I'll do it," the Enabler begins to respond "You do it. I'll help." The transition happens in different ways. Some programs are ready to start the model nearly at this point. For others, this stage will evolve during the latter part of the first year, or into the second. Some of the processes involved may be:

1. Giving feedback on participant performance: The Enabler observes how things are going and shares these impressions, without judgment and on the basis of mutual respect and trust. After children leave a classroom, teaching staff and consultant can discuss daily programming, progress of an individual child, etc. After a committee meeting, the discussion of "How'd it go?" provides an opportunity to encourage participant self-evaluation and new learning.

2. Applying training from other sources: The Enabler works along with training--previous or current--from other sources. Examples would include in-service sessions conducted by some outside person, visits from other consultants, college course work being done by staff, material sent from a central distribution source, or staff attendance at a professional meeting or workshop. The enabling job becomes a coordination effort, and one of helping people apply this training in daily work locally. If various training approaches are in conflict, this needs to be dealt with, like any other problem.

3. Developing local resources and relations with other agencies: The Enabler can be a communication link with community persons outside the program. She or he helps people get together and work toward common purposes in educating young children. The consultant can advise and help initiate exchanging resources (of which she or he may be one), pooling knowledge and materials, cooperating in community-wide endeavors. The Enabler can work with universities or other contract trainers, community health services, professional organizations, public school systems, for instance, to obtain better coordination of child and family services, to share training and resource materials, to exchange opportunities for staff enrichment. Liaison may also be needed with agencies or other administrative levels with which the program is affiliated, e.g., regional offices, state training or licensing agencies, etc.

4. Modeling: The Enablers' roles and functions can serve as a model for others, and probably do. What the consultant is doing, others are experiencing, and may be learning to do. Local participants increasingly enable each other, and are increasingly able to recognize their own abilities to do so.

5. Aiding application of problem-solving behavior: Clarifying what is happening, and progress toward goals, continues. This may be in regard to conflict, or may be part of ongoing evaluation. Goal-understanding is a process in itself, and changes as knowledge and experience accumulate. As people acquire a sense of competence and mutuality about setting priorities and meeting crises, the community-defined requests of the Enabler also change.

6. Highlighting role changes in participants: Part of the enabling job at this stage is to aid, support, and confirm realization of increasing personal competencies and community program strengths. The Enabler should maintain respect, and trust, and increasingly foster autonomy in individuals and the program as a whole.

7. Evaluating progress and initiating termination: This decision, like other aspects of the model's structure, is best determined by the community in consultation with the Enabler. Looking at original assessments, reasons for initiating the Model, and goals of the program may be helpful. However, the product of the Enabler Model is not necessarily the number of problems solved or goals achieved. It is, rather a confident, cooperative community program wherein parents and staff members feel they can function mutually and capably in a continuing, high quality, multi-component education program for young children.

Stage IV. Termination of Service

Many of the activities suggested above are also transitions to autonomy. Just as direct training requests become fewer, and requests for advice increase,

so will consulting functions become less needed and wanted. "What shall we do?" becomes "Let me tell you what we did," from the community. The Enabler is no longer needed. Some specific procedures which accompany the termination of the Enabler Model work are suggested:

1. Provide a plan for continuation without consultant services, including a preliminary plan for the next program year. This may include agreements concerning new role definitions or job descriptions, for instance. It may recognize, formalize, place on record, and schedule changes which have, in fact, already taken place.

2. Complete records of resources available for program development and crisis-coping. Examples are making a bluebook of social services, updating a file on community health agencies, formalizing agreements with cooperating groups and institutions. It may mean locating and listing persons experienced and willing to function as temporary problem-solvers, such as former program parents, past directors and teachers, staff and volunteers in other close-by institutions. Enablers will usually be available to communities they have served, if they are needed again.

3. Provide a time frame for termination. Make sure everyone understands it. The planning will schedule the Enabler's final visit or two. The Enabler and the community should be aware that approaching termination of the project could stimulate upset, if only because good friendships have been formed. It can also be a time when happenings become conceptualized in an overall summary, or evaluation. It may be when community and Enabler alike realize and appreciate some portion of how much they have learned from one another.

Issues and Cautions of the Enabling Process

Certain issues are pervasive throughout these stages of Model development. They arise almost any time, almost everywhere. The processes of change make special demands on the program and the Enabler. Both can be prepared for some of these in advance:

1. Time and flexibility are needed. The Model stimulates interest and excitement as people work out goals and plans for themselves. It also demands extra time and work for the meetings, conferences, and informal get-togethers of staff, parents, and the Enabler. Flexibility of staff in arranging time for communicating both within and outside of the program day and administrative planning for these meetings are important to the success of the Model.

2. Progress will be uneven. Changes rarely takes place smoothly over a period of time. The process of program development does not lend itself to formal prediction and regulation. The course of the Enabler Model is usually one of slow improvement punctuated with periods of rapid change, of crises, and of difficulty. Working properly, goals change as others are achieved or judged no longer appropriate; plans change in response to changing community needs; training needs differ as personnel are trained. Staff attrition and new families each year make shifting group membership a constant. Realistically, at no point can participants relax and contend the Model has been implemented, or that it no longer requires work. A program should become increasingly less dependent upon the Enabler to initiate and to sustain processes.

3. Expect discouragement. Because progress is uneven, it is easy to become discouraged and wish for a more directive approach from the Enabler or an administrator. Goals and plans arising from a parent-staff-community consensus need to be remembered, protected, and sustained through these periods.

4. Enabling is not manipulation. The Enabler because she or he respects community abilities to decide and resolve conflicts, does not take sides, or make solutions. The consultant can point out alternatives and compromise possibilities, give information, and may provide professional opinion which the program should feel free to accept or reject. This impartiality is sometimes irritating to those emotionally involved in opposing viewpoints. The Enabler's value to the program is destroyed if she or he becomes identified with one side in a conflict. Respect for this neutral role by the community is essential; the Enabler can also make sure this is not mistaken for lack of concern.

5. The Enabler does not meet all training needs. The consultant is not a substitute for training resources already available. Part of the Enabler's role calls for facilitating the program to plan and mold any general services, such as Head Start training through regional offices, to local needs. The Enabler works with the program in communicating needs to trainers, and vice versa.

6. Innovations in one area necessitate adaptations elsewhere. For example, decisions to individualize the educational program may demand rescheduling and new modes of work from psychologist and social worker. Increasing community health delivery to families may diminish the nurse's availability directly to the children's classrooms. Changes in classroom schedules may require different meal preparation timing and procedures. Staff need to be alerted to the discomfort which different programming may arouse in other staff whose work is effected. All

staff members should be fully informed and as involved as possible in decisions effecting them.

7. Genuine cooperation is needed. The Enabler can only function effectively if the people locally involved are willing to share their insights, values, goals and preferences, as well as their constraints. Program staff and parents should be prepared to help the Enabler understand their hopes and aspirations, fears, and problems. Only then can the special skills of the Enabler be released on behalf of a community.

8. Continuity of the Enabler programming requires local investment in follow-up. Even though the Enabler visits the site monthly, the Model work goes on every day. That is part of the commitment. It helps to have a local staff administratively responsible for the Model work between, as well as during, consultant visits. Plans can be confirmed at the end of each visit for specific interim activities, and for tasks indicated for the Enabler next time.

Outcomes of the Enabler Model

Is it worth it? Local people who have invested themselves think it is; very different kinds of progress have taken place in different original sites. Because goals are locally defined, it is not possible to predict specific achievements which should be made wherever the Enabler Model is employed. Each situation IS unique; results also vary.

Changes in such areas as the nature and extent of interpersonal relationships emerge subtly and slowly, and cannot be easily determined through objective measurements. Effects or influences of the Model approach become evident through staff and Enabler reviews--informal, sincere, open examination--of the scope, quality, and interrelations of changes in each component. Comments and evaluation from parents are valuable in determining outcomes and effects of the Model. Observations from interested citizens and repeated observations of growth and change in the children reveal results of Model implementation.

Generalized outcomes have been confirmed in the original Enabler Model programs. Some results are intrinsic to the Model, given its fulfilled

conditions. Others reflect the achievement of high quality in comprehensive developmental programming. Some common program outcomes of the Model include these developments:

1. Intensification of team work and coordination of services within the program,
2. Increased parent involvement and parents assuming greater responsibilities in program determination and in solution of community problems,
3. Encouragement of self-evaluation, including specification of own training needs, recognition of limitations, and heightened desire for improvements,
4. More effective voluntary sharing of information, skills, and materials among program participants,
5. More extensive use of local resources in curriculum and career development activities, including discovery and use of talents and abilities of parents,
6. Increased involvement of community agencies and persons outside the program,
7. Enrichment of the curriculum in a cultural context, including more devising of locally distinct cultural emphases,
8. Emphasis on the development of child's individuality: self-image, learning style, and ability to deal with problems independently and in cooperation with other children and adults.

Applicability

The Enabling Model was originated for multi-component, Head Start programs. It is directly applicable to any early childhood education group including day care and nursery school programs, or to any phase of these operations. It has also been used in related programs such as teacher-training and Home Start. It is economical and adaptable. It leads to greater parent involvement, staff cooperation and investment, and community acceptance and contribution. The Model provides an ideal framework for program innovation.

The Enablers, in evaluating their own experiences, agree that this assignment--although often intense, difficult, and demanding--has been personally gratifying and professionally enriching. The consultants feel

they have learned a great deal. Offering a structure for extending developmental education to adults, the Model also offers the educator-as-consultant a refresher course and field experiences that are exciting, involving, yet can be paralleled with other job responsibilities. The Enabler role seems ideal for adding current field experience to the research and college teaching of mid-career academic personnel.

In Summary

The purpose of the Enabler Model is to give professional, responsive help to a community group as they define and develop the kind of early childhood education they want for their children and their own unique local situation and needs. The Model is based on the positive educational value of human individuality, the life-long ability of all humans to learn and develop, and the power of human sociability in determining the content, extent, and quality of learning. Local needs and priorities establish the orientation of consistent technical assistance, consultation, and sustaining support from a consultant who returns regularly and can respond to and confirm developmental progress in children, adults, and the community program. The matching of a qualified Enabler consultant willing to function within the personal constraints of the Model with a community of parents and staff members willing to work intensely over time for improvements is the necessary condition of the Model. It appears, through the original trials of this approach in Head Start Planned Variation, that services requested and indicated of the consultant vary with the stage of program development and readiness for the Model work. The Enabler's job does change with progress over a time span of about two years. Being intrinsically individualized and developmental, the Model leads to general outcomes in which these themes are central, as well as specific outcomes which depend on locally determined directions. In the Enabler Model, a tradition can be recognized which is both very new and very old in American education--the educator as a provider of professional services according to the requests and

definitions of the immediate consumers of those services, the children and the adults who have primary responsibility for their well-being.

Bibliography

1. Bowman, Barbara, and Holt, Bess-Gene."Enabler Model."Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwestern Association for the Education of Young Children. Des Moines, Iowa, May 18, 1973.

2. Holt, Bess-Gene."The Enabler Model". Paper presented at the meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 5, 1971.

3. Katz, Lilian G. "The Enabling Model for Early Childhood Programs". In, Katz, Lilian. Talks with Teachers. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977, pp.49-55.